

Find the Perfect Read at Westwinds

By JUSTIN GRAEBER

Marilyn and Chris Haraden knew when they bought the Westwinds Bookshop in 2004 that they were inheriting a proud tradition of independent bookselling.

Maragaret Metcalf, who founded the store in 1946, used to joke that the building is a bookshop and not a bookstore. It is not a storage facility for books, but rather a place to shop for the perfect read. And 63 years later, the store is still entwined with the literary culture in Duxbury.

The Haraden's were looking at other bookstores, including one in Hingham and one in the Hanover Mall, when the opportunity to buy Westwinds surfaced.

"We really liked the hometown feel of it," said Marilyn Haraden. "This is exactly what we were looking for. Small, cozy, in a nice established town, with people who care about reading."

After negotiations with then-owner Cissy Greenbaum, they decided to buy the store, becoming the ninth owners.

"Through many meetings and conversations, we finally decided this was the one," Haraden said. "This was the one that fit us the best."

Marilyn Haraden was originally in the culinary field, but was looking for something new. Where her husband is a writer (currently the editor of the Hull Times) a bookstore seemed like a natural fit.

"Where we both love reading so much and we have kids that love reading, it just fit," she said.

Haraden's favorite part of running the store is interacting with customers, and she sees it as the key aspect that separates Westwinds from bigger chain stores.

"It's the customer service that is our key for survival," she said. "We come in, we talk books, and customers get to know each one of our styles. It's not just a factory where you pick things up."

There are about 5,000 books in the store at a time, she said. Each title is hand chosen by the staff.

"We've read a lot of them so we're able to recommend the books we think are truly worth reading," she said. "That's what people love about coming in here. They know they're going to get a book that somebody enjoyed very much."

The fierceness with which Duxbury residents protect their small businesses and the vibrant arts scene in town helps sustain the store, Haraden said.

"People are very caring and devoted to their town and

we feel that. It's very comforting to know that they care so much about their town," she said.

Westwinds works with various groups in town, such as the schools for summer reading, and the senior center. They sell tickets for events sponsored by the newcomers club, garden club and other organizations. They also work closely with the library, and are working with chef's at Foodie's on a cookbook/demonstration collaboration.

"We're trying to all work together," Haraden said.

To get the books on the shelves, the Westwinds staff attends local and national book conferences. They also get lists from publishers detailing new releases, about six months in advance. Often, they can request advance copies of books the store might be interested. In some cases, like with the Harry Potter books, they will only get the books a day in advance.

"We try to keep a nice

balance," Haraden said. "You want to keep your classics, but you want to mix in your new releases. We're trying to mix it up and keep it fresh."

She said that any reports on the death of the literary scene are greatly exaggerated.

"I love to read a debut novel, to read someone you've never read before and it's great," she said. "There's definitely still room for fresh work and new artists to come up and blow us away."

At the end of the day, Haraden believes the personal touch of her store separates it from the pack.

"It's more of an experience when you come here rather than just buying an item at a store," she said. "You come away with something, whether it's a great book or a great conversation."

The Clipper is looking for local businesses to profile in Duxbury Means Business. If you've got a favorite local business you'd like to see written up, drop a line to editor@duxburyclipper.com

WESTWINDS

Features: Wide array of fiction and non-fiction books for children and adults, online shopping through Web site, tickets available for local events.

Located: 45 Depot St.

Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Phone: 781-934-2128

Web site: westwindsbookshop.com



A LITERARY LIFE: Marilyn Haraden and her husband Chris have owned Westwinds Bookshop since 2004.



Westwinds Bookshop is located in Duxbury Marketplace in Halls Corner.